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Children's Discovery Trail Guide Lost Creek



d Rock Canyon Recreation Lands

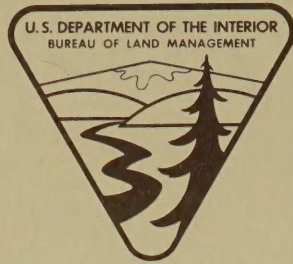
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

Stateline Resource Area - Las Vegas District



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1987



This publication was designed, written and illustrated by staff members of the Bureau of Land Management in Nevada.

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The Nevada Wildlife Federation, the Silver State's oldest, largest and most respected conservation organization, is dedicated to the conservation of Nevada's natural resources, particularly wildlife and wildlife habitat, through education and action programs. Contributions to, and memberships in the Nevada Wildlife Federation are tax deductible and help fund conservation education projects and publications such as this. An application for membership is included on the last page of this publication.

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CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY TRAIL GUIDE TO LOST CREEK

A NATURAL RESOURCE EDUCATION GUIDE FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

The purpose of this guide is to orient students and teachers to the natural area found in Lost Creek Canyon. Information about flash flooding, shrub and tree identification, uses of plants, early Native American lifestyles, natural springs and resource sensitivity is included.

More indepth information on all these subjects is available from naturalists at the Red Rock Canyon visitor center. A 15 minute video tape designed for classroom orientation to Red Rock Canyon and a 12 minute video tape on the adaptations of plants and animals to the desert are available for loan from the Red Rock Canyon visitor center. Both are geared to elementary school children. Visitor center hours are: Friday through Tuesday 9am to 4pm. If you choose to visit the center with your class, please phone ahead at (702) 363-1921.

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SAFETY, DESERT CONSERVATION AND ETHICS

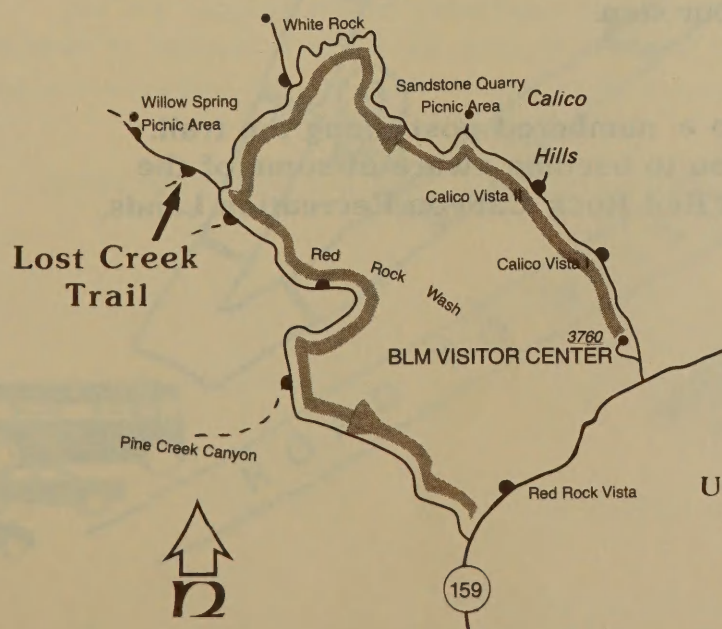
Desert Safety

While examining plants and rocks, be aware that these may be the homes of small animals. Lift rocks from the far side, or away from you, so scorpions and spiders are not able to sting or bite you. Never put your hands where you cannot see first - especially in the shade. Snakes will be seeking shade to keep cool.

Desert Conservation and Ethics

Do not collect plants, flowers or rocks because others will be using this same trail in order to learn about Red Rock Canyon. They will want to see the same natural objects that you used to learn about the area.

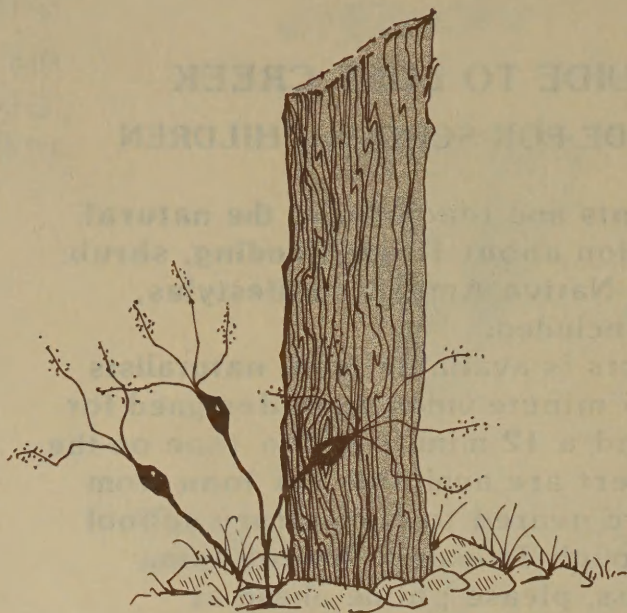
Do not write on rock walls. Leave their natural beauty for others to enjoy.



RED ROCK CANYON RECREATION LANDS



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
LAS VEGAS DISTRICT



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Children's Discovery Trail at Red Rock Canyon Recreation Lands.

You are about to set out on a hike, exploring with your senses.
You will see, listen to, and feel a few of the secrets Lost Creek has
to offer.

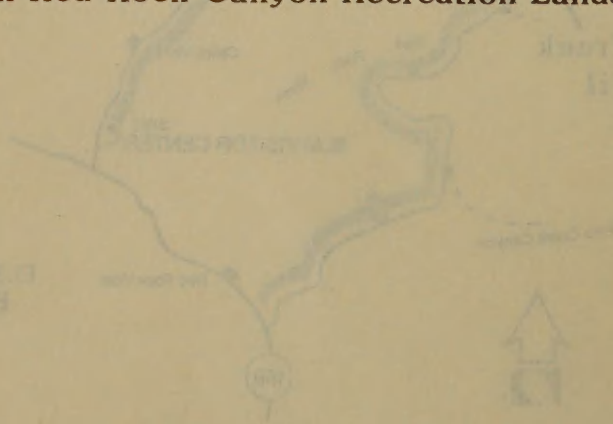
You will hike a half mile, climb up and down several hills, cross a stream,
and scramble over several large sandstone rocks.

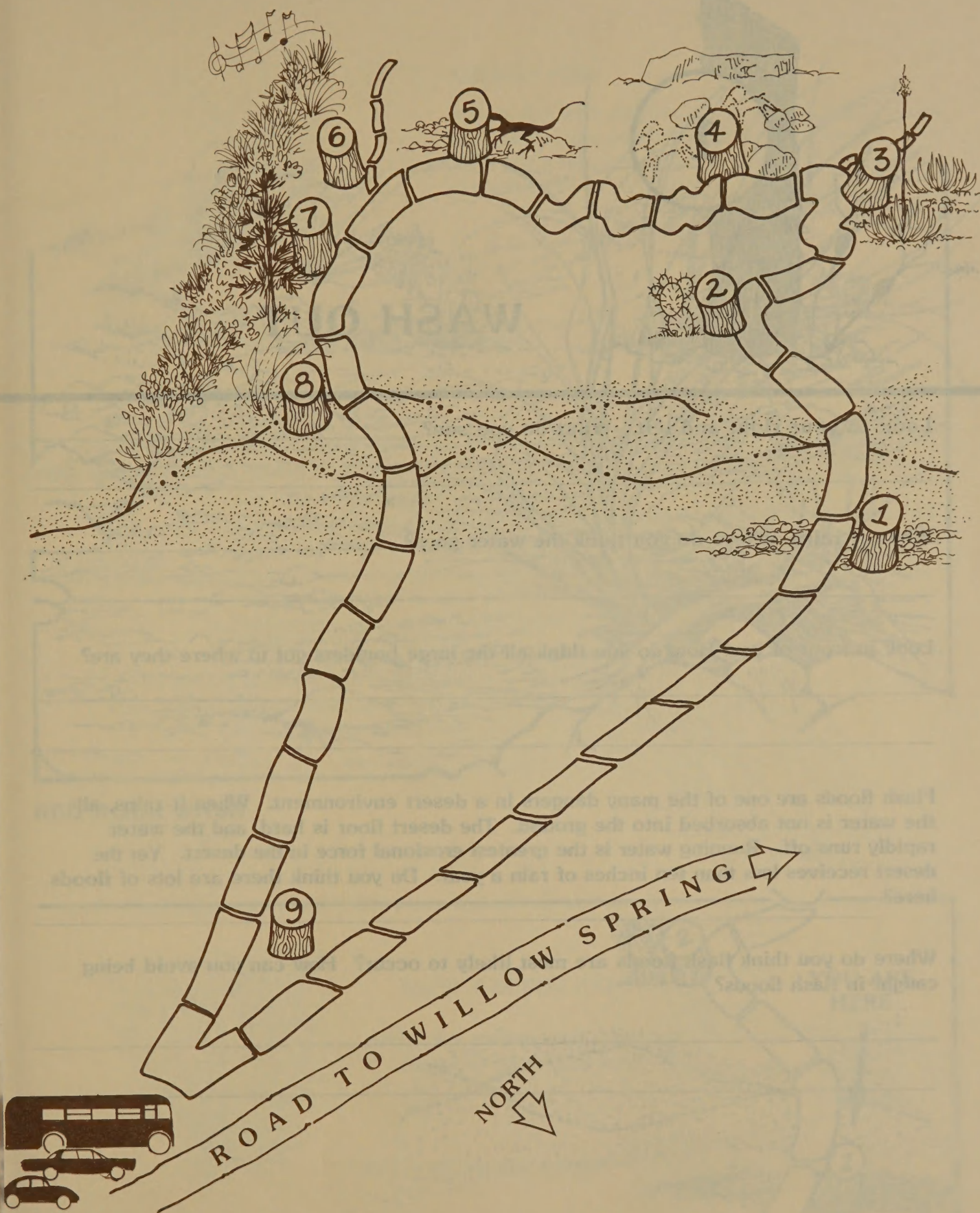
Please walk with care!

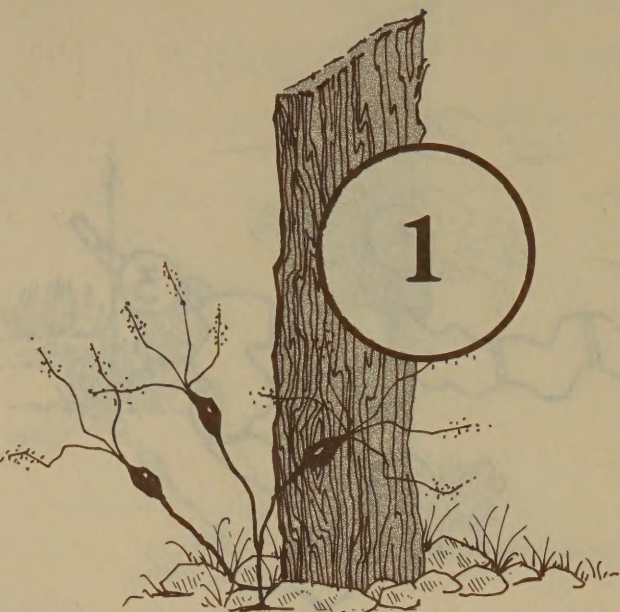
Carry water and dress according to the weather. Temperatures may
range from 35° F in February to 110° F in July.

Go slowly along the trail. Watch your step.
Enjoy all there is to experience.

Each page of this guide is keyed to a numbered post along the trail.
We hope this pamphlet will help you to become aware of some of the
many natural features that exist in Red Rock Canyon Recreation Lands.







WASH OUT

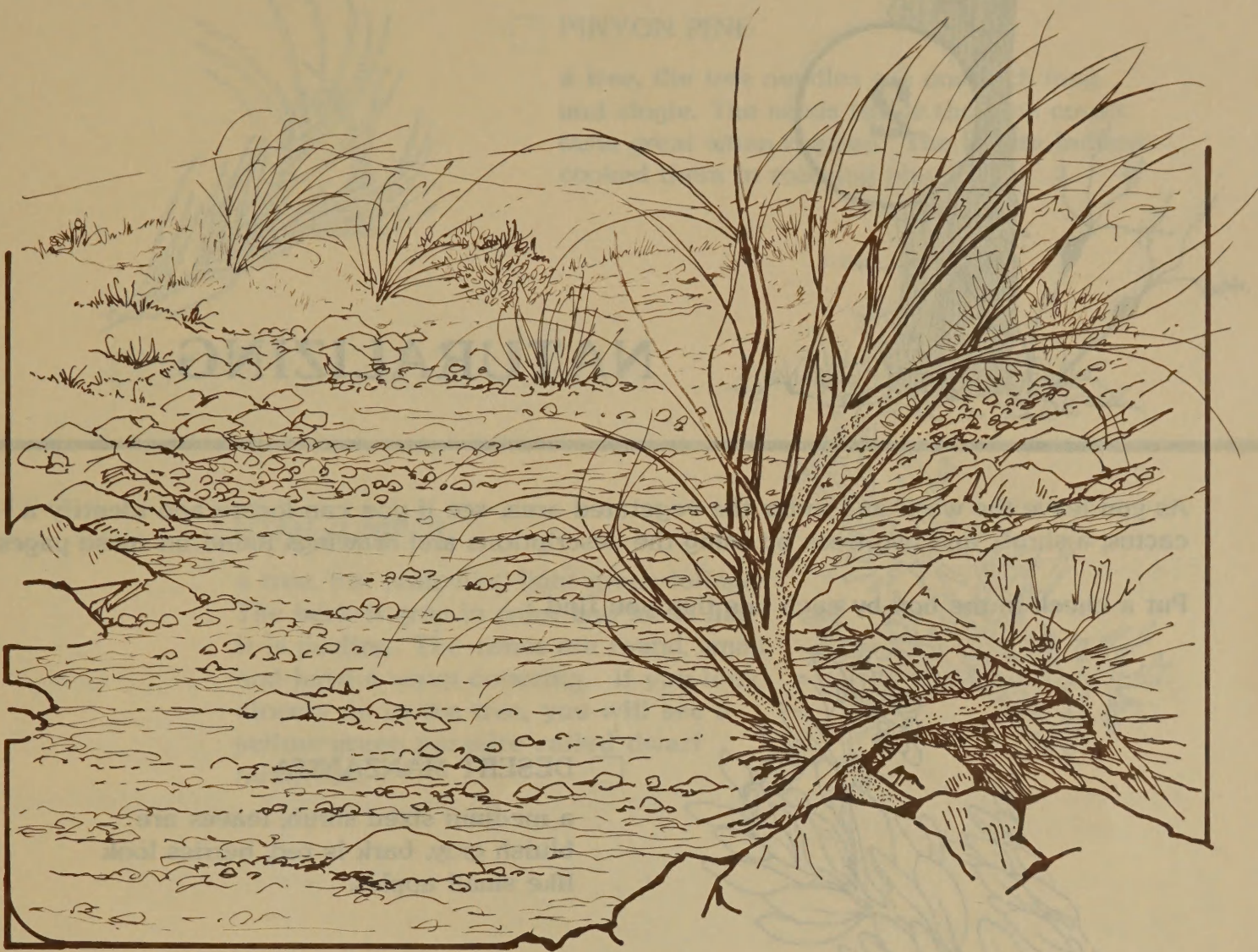
Look to your right and left. What do you see? _____

When it rains, where do you think the water goes? _____

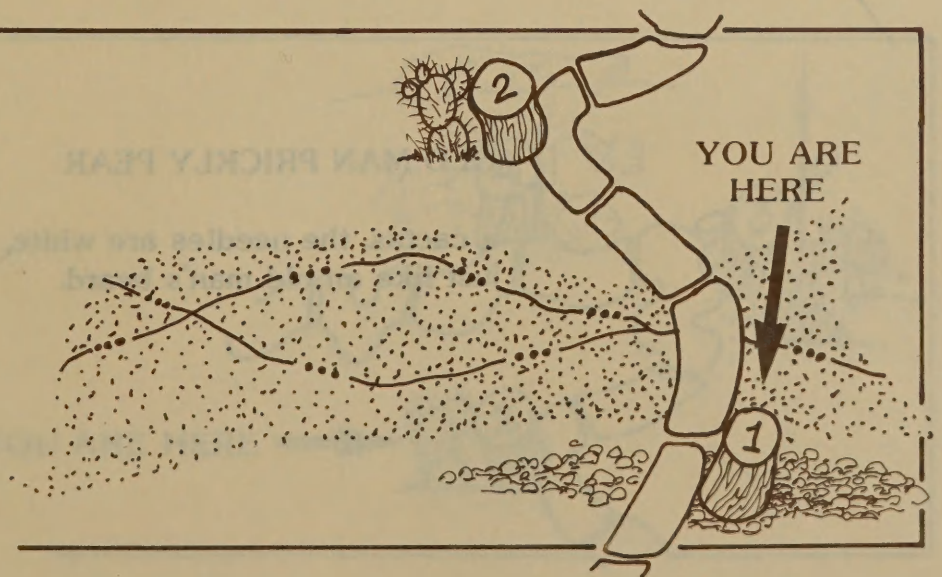
Look in front of you. How do you think all the large boulders got to where they are? _____

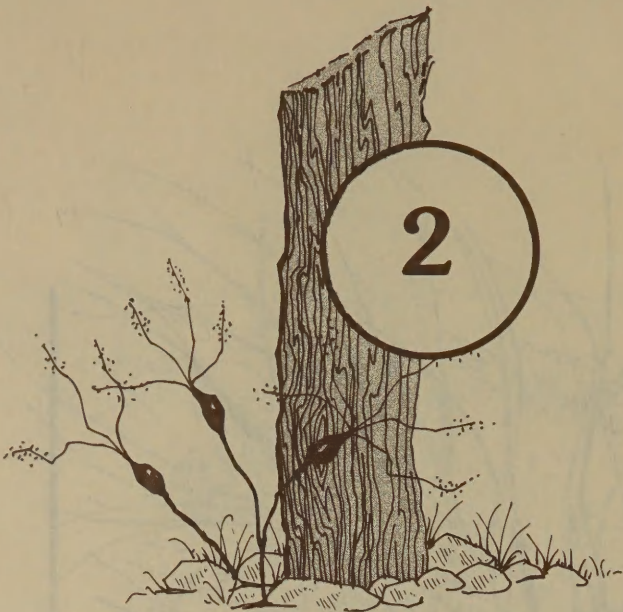
Flash floods are one of the many dangers in a desert environment. When it rains, all the water is not absorbed into the ground. The desert floor is hard, and the water rapidly runs off. Running water is the greatest erosional force in the desert. Yet the desert receives less than ten inches of rain a year. Do you think there are lots of floods here?

Where do you think flash floods are most likely to occur? How can you avoid being caught in flash floods?



RED ROCK WASH





2

NATURALIZING

As you leave the wash and enter the vegetated area, see if you can locate and identify a cactus, a shrub, and two trees by using the descriptions and drawings found on these pages.

Put a check in the box by each one that you find.

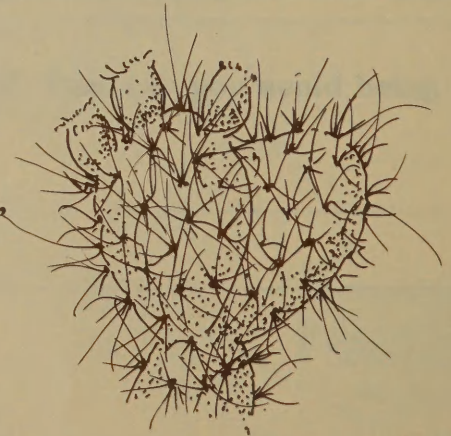


☐ DESERT MANZANITA

a medium sized shrub, leaves are bluish gray, bark is red, berries look like small apples.

☐ OLD MAN PRICKLY PEAR

a cactus, the needles are white, just like an old man's beard.



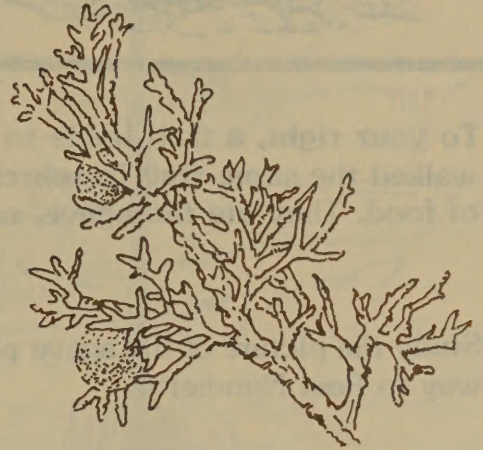


☐ PINYON PINE

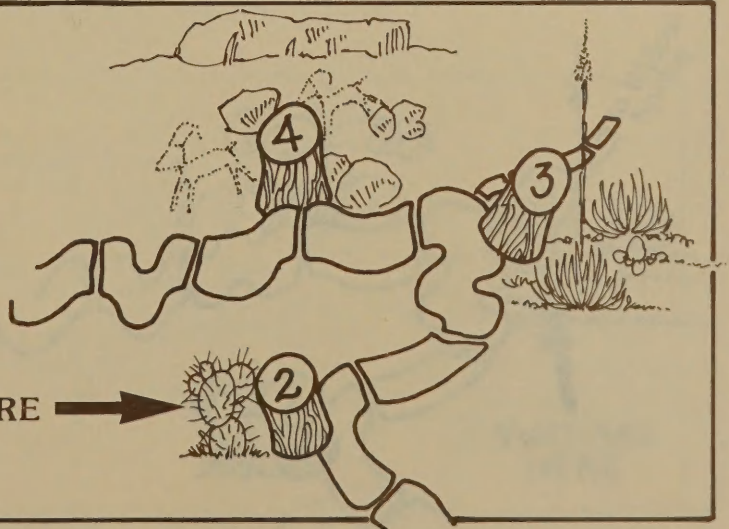
a tree, the tree needles are one inch long and single. The seeds inside the pine cones taste great when roasted. The Paiute Indians cooked them in roasting pits.

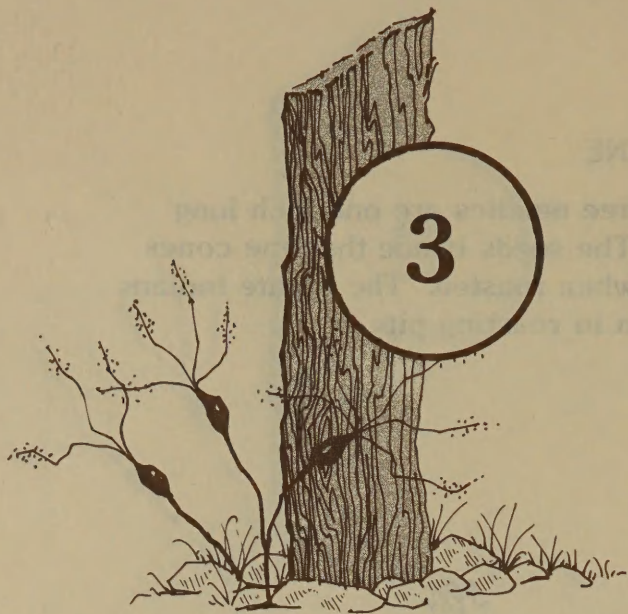
☐ UTAH JUNIPER

a tree, has scale-like, light green foliage. The bark is gray in color and looks like it is peeling. The cones are round, small, and have a waxy covering. If you look closely up in the tree, you will see a yellow-green parasite called dwarf mistletoe.



YOU ARE HERE →





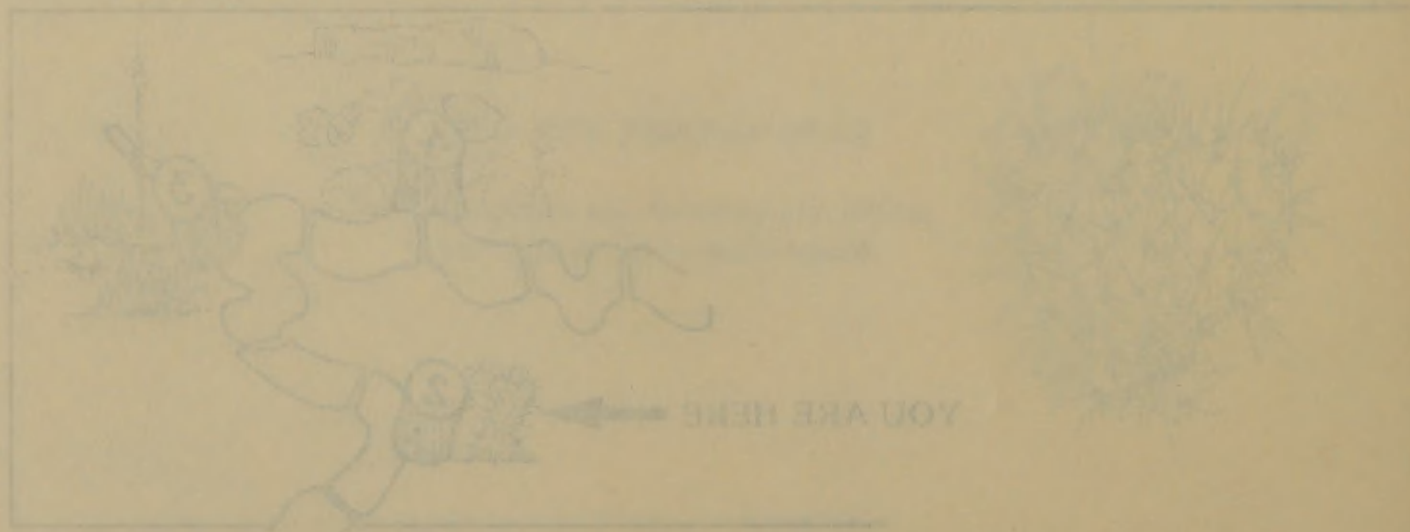
WILD FOOD FIND

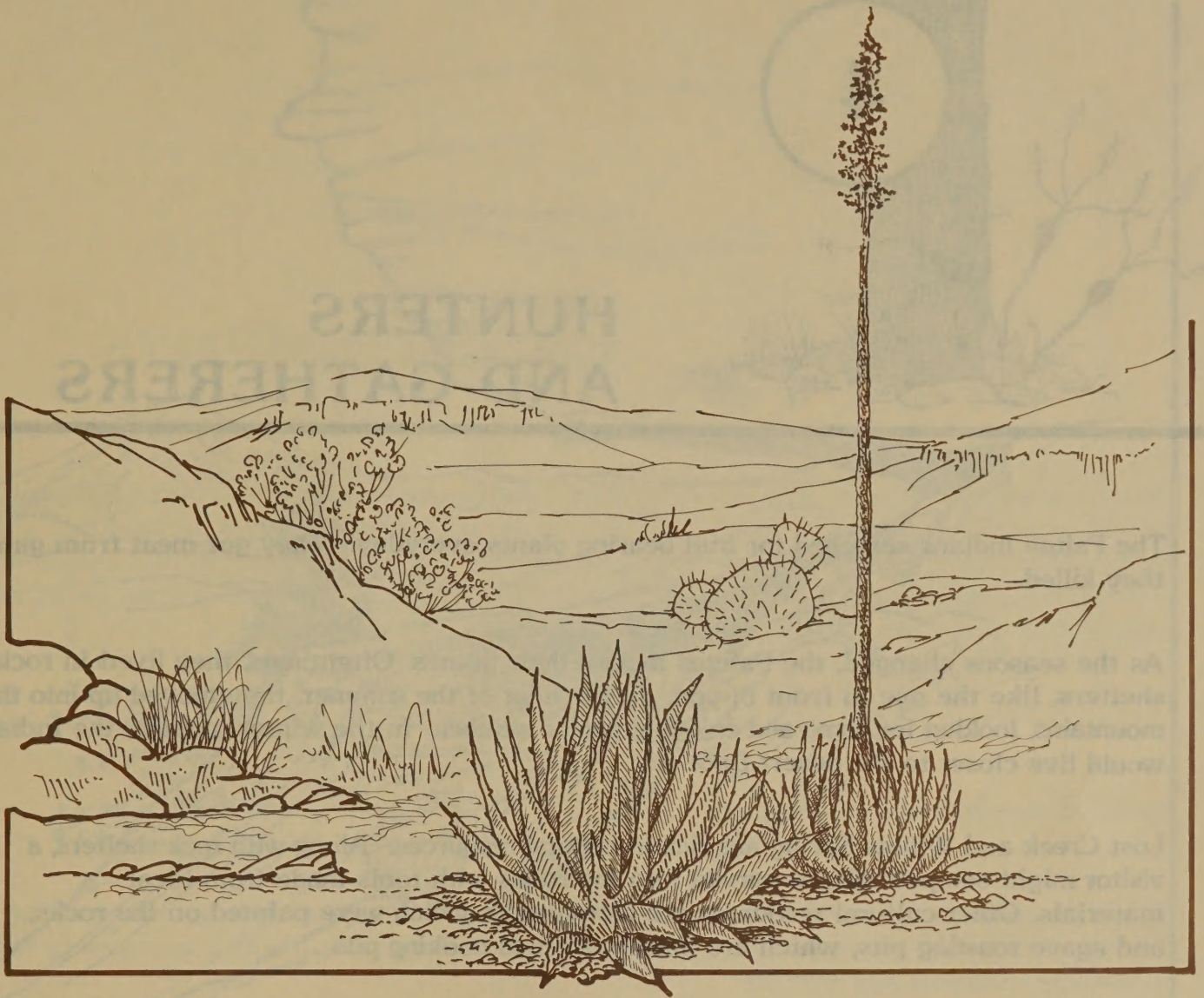
To your right, a trail leads to Willow Spring. Several hundred years ago, Paiute Indians walked the same trail in search of the agave plant. This plant served as a major source of food. They ate the agave, much like we eat an artichoke, after roasting it.

Study the picture of the agave plant. Watch carefully for this plant along the trail on the way to Post Number 4.

Caution! Be careful when you find an agave. The leaves of the plant are sharp and can cut your fingers or hand.

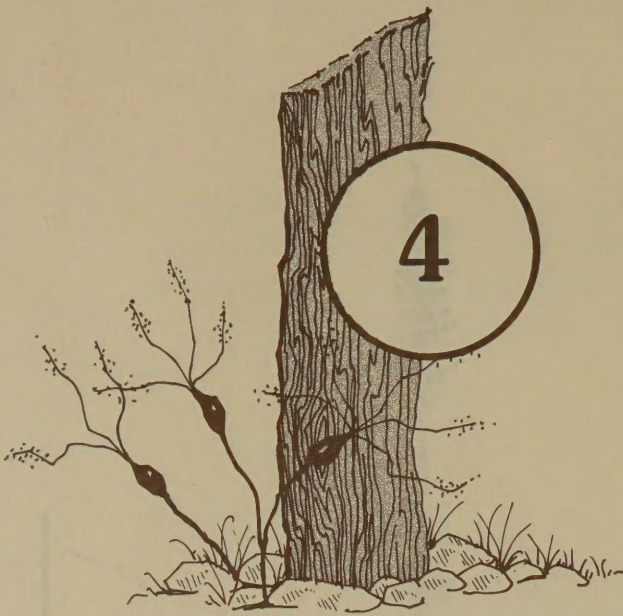
Did you find the agave? _____





AGAVE PLANT





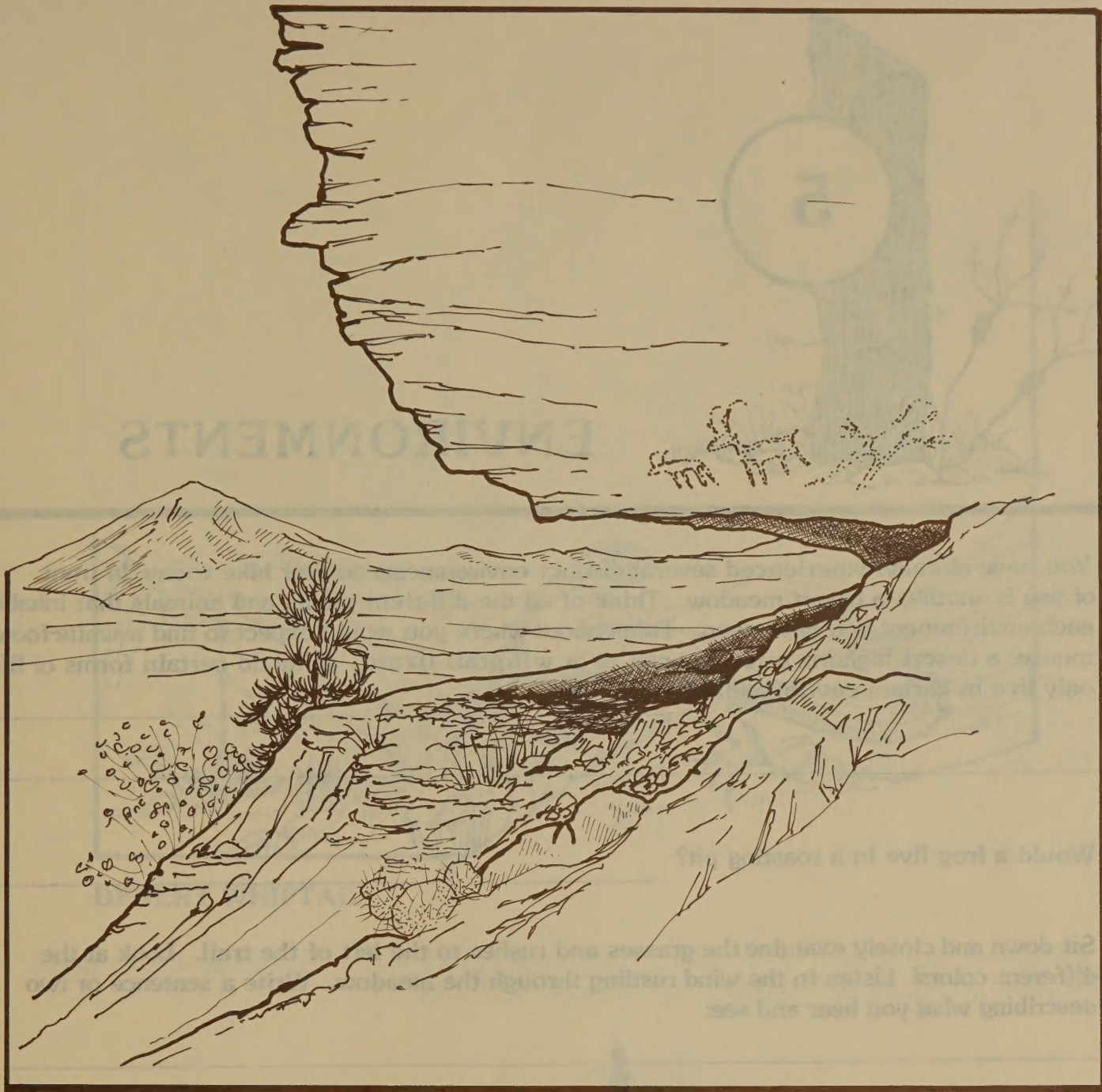
HUNTERS AND GATHERERS

The Paiute Indians searched for fruit bearing plants everyday. They got meat from game they killed.

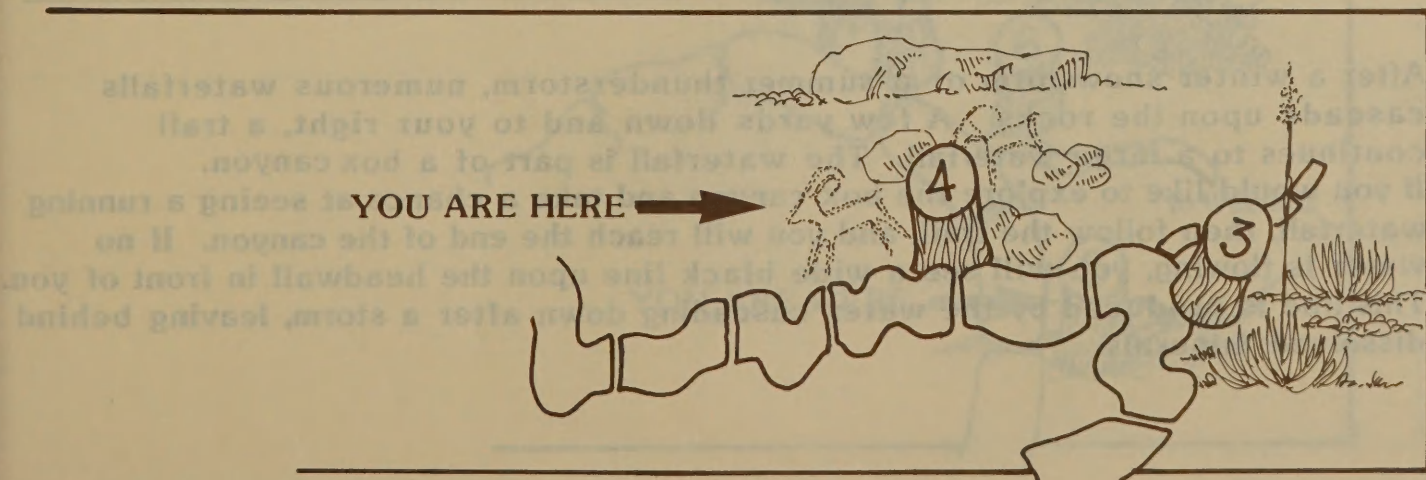
As the seasons changed, the Paiutes moved their homes. Oftentimes, they lived in rock shelters, like the one in front of you. In the heat of the summer, they moved up into the mountains, looking for game and enjoying cooler weather. In the winter months, the Indians would live closer to the desert floor.

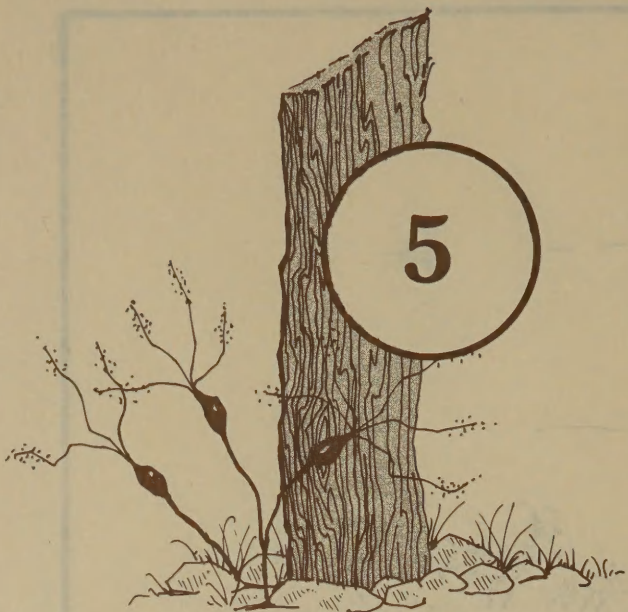
Lost Creek and Willow Spring are rich in cultural resources. Along with rock shelters, a visitor might see petroglyphs carved into the rocks with tools made from local materials. Other cultural resources are pictographs, which were painted on the rocks, and agave roasting pits, which are limestone-lined cooking pits.





ROCK SHELTER





ENVIRONMENTS

You have already experienced several distinct environments on your hike today. In front of you is another -a desert meadow. Think of all the different plants and animals that inhabit each environment you have seen. Think about where you would expect to find a white-footed mouse, a desert bighorn, a roadrunner, or a whiptail lizard. Why do certain forms of life only live in certain environments?

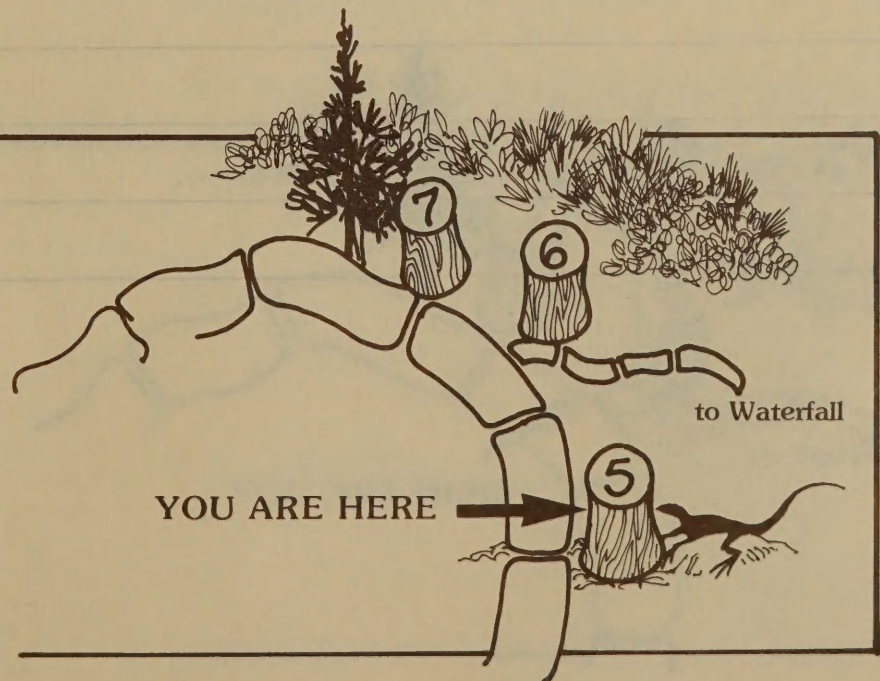
Would a frog live in a roasting pit?

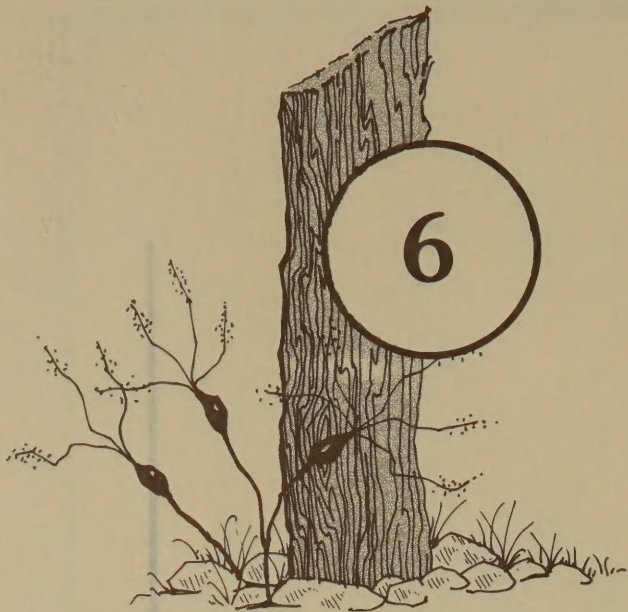
Sit down and closely examine the grasses and rushes to the left of the trail. Look at the different colors! Listen to the wind rustling through the meadow. Write a sentence or two describing what you hear and see:

After a winter snowstorm or a summer thunderstorm, numerous waterfalls cascade upon the rocks. A few yards down and to your right, a trail continues to a large waterfall. The waterfall is part of a box canyon. If you would like to explore the box canyon and take a chance at seeing a running waterfall, then follow the trail, and you will reach the end of the canyon. If no water is flowing, you will see a wide black line upon the headwall in front of you. This line is produced by the water cascading down after a storm, leaving behind dissolved minerals.



DESERT WHIPTAIL





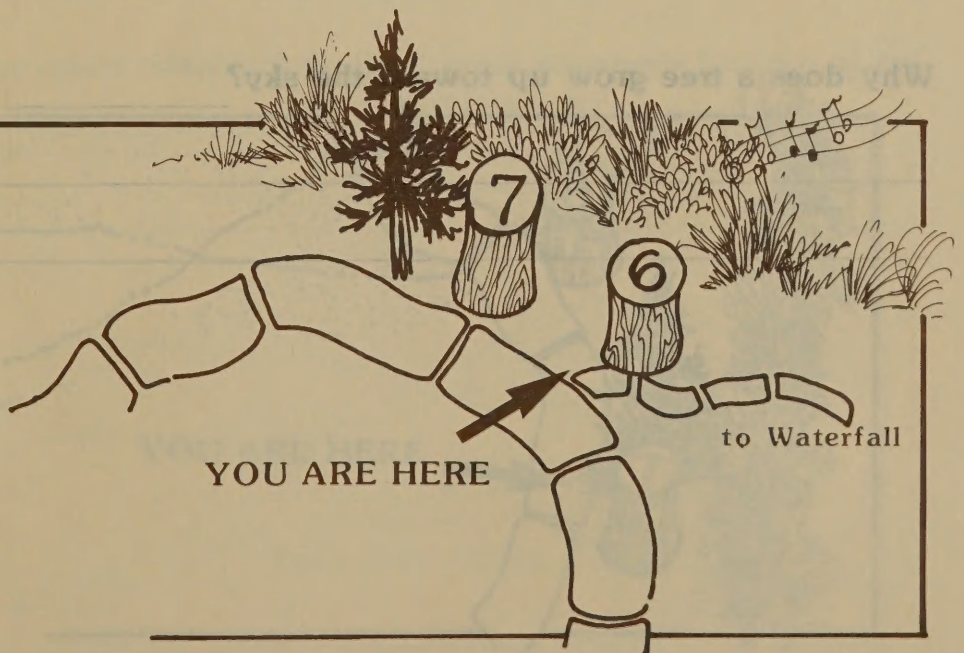
WATER MUSIC

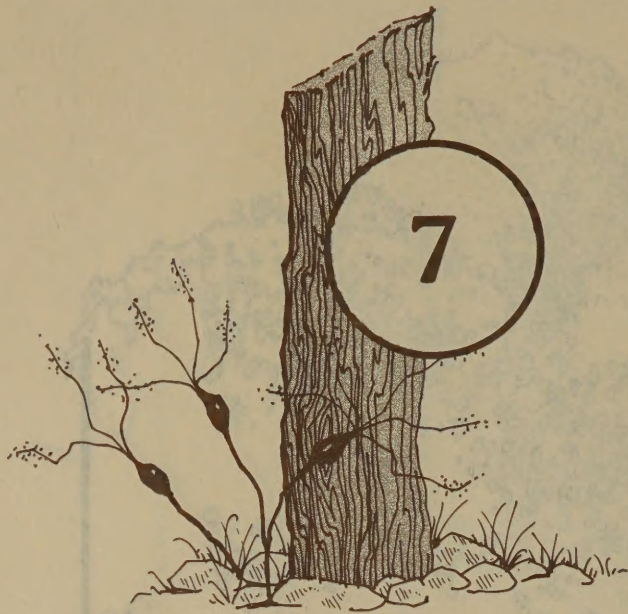
Sit down and close your eyes. Listen closely to the many sounds around you.
What did you hear?

Did the water have different tones?

Were they pleasing to the ear?

Walk over to the water and put your finger tips into it. Put your whole hand
beneath the surface. Write down what it feels like.





OLD FRIENDS

Every tree has a character of its own. The tree before you is no exception. It even has feelings, too! Close your eyes and run your hand over the bark. How does it feel?

Look way up through the branches. What do you see?

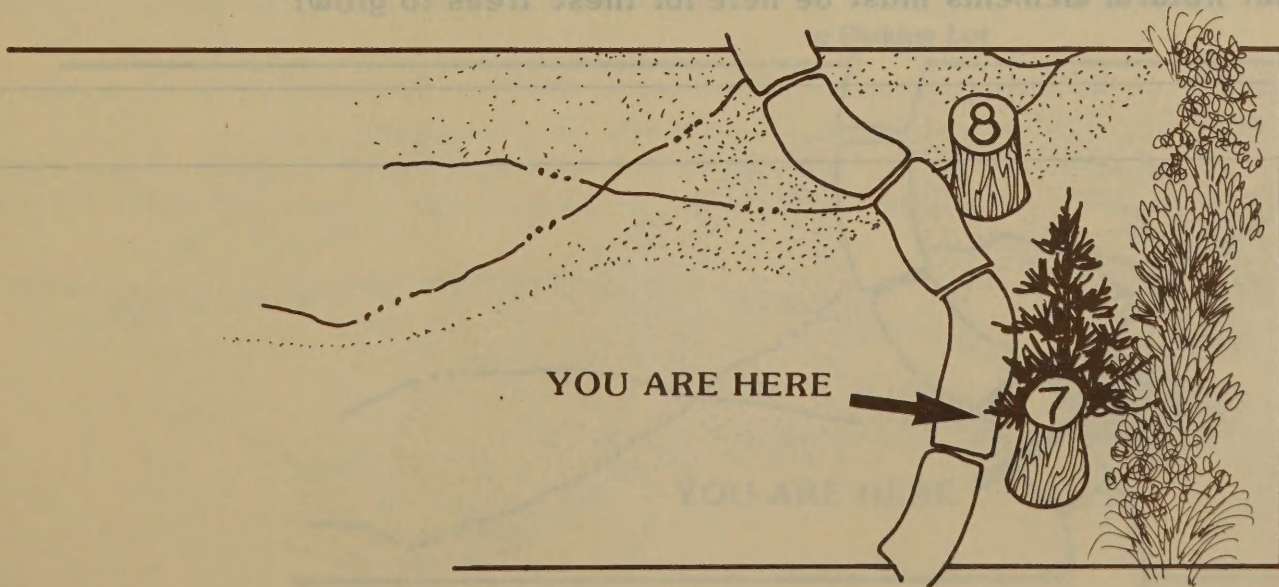
Can you give the tree a name?

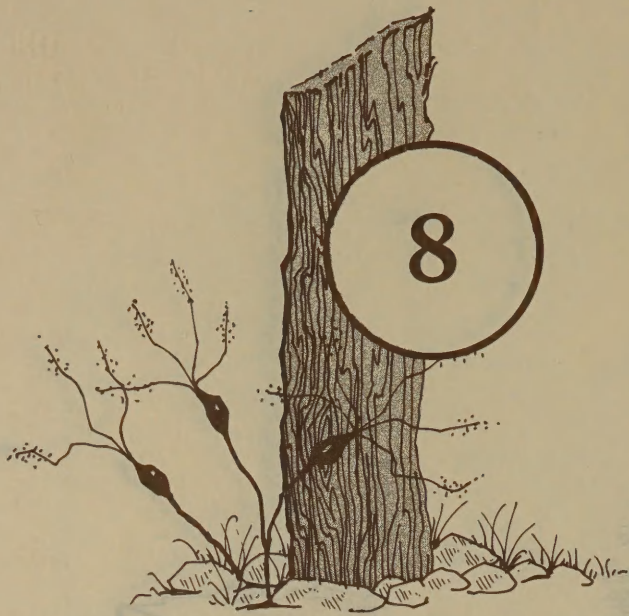
What does the bark smell like?

Why does a tree grow up toward the sky?



PONDEROSA PINE





NEW FRIENDS

Feel the branches of the desert willow in front of you. Gently bend the branches. Are they stiff?

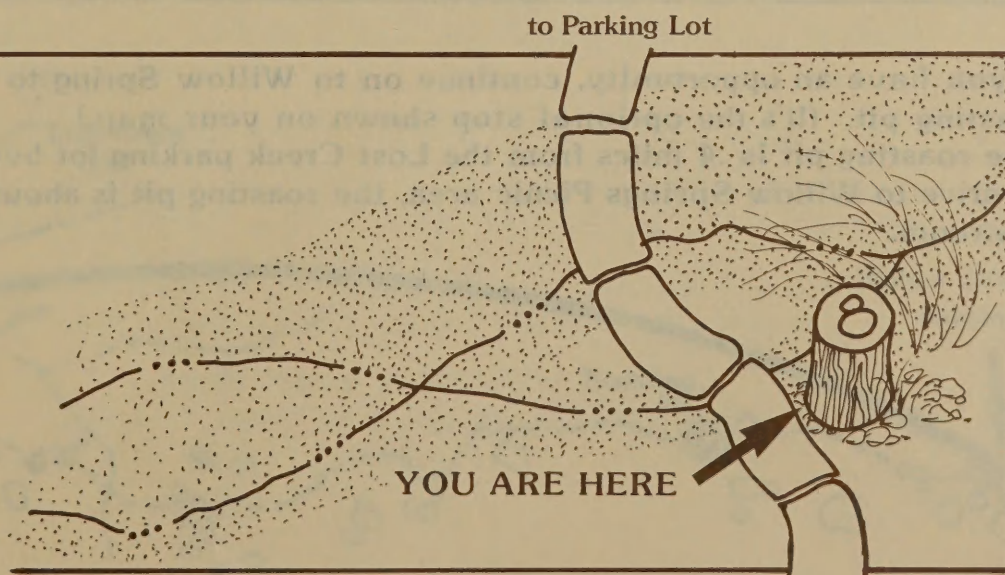
How does this tree feel in comparison to others you have handled today?

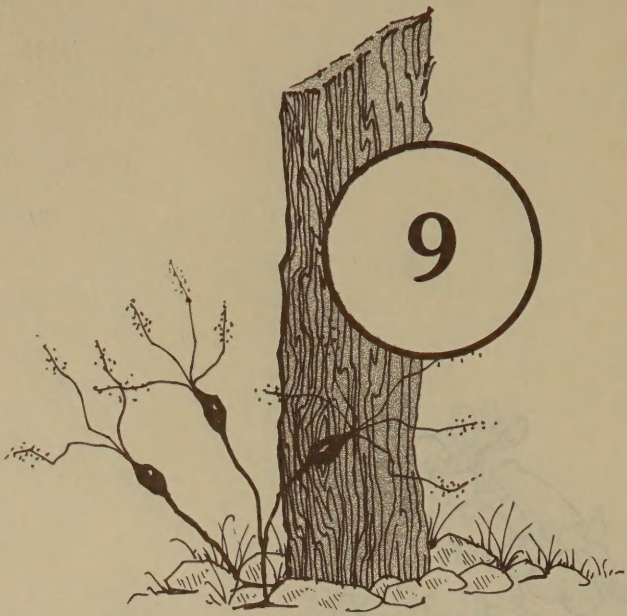
Why is this tree bendable and green?

What natural elements must be here for these trees to grow?



DESERT WILLOW





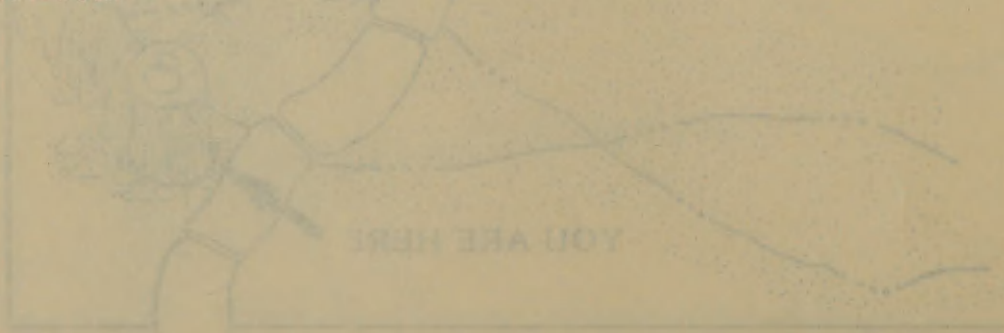
CONSIDERATIONS

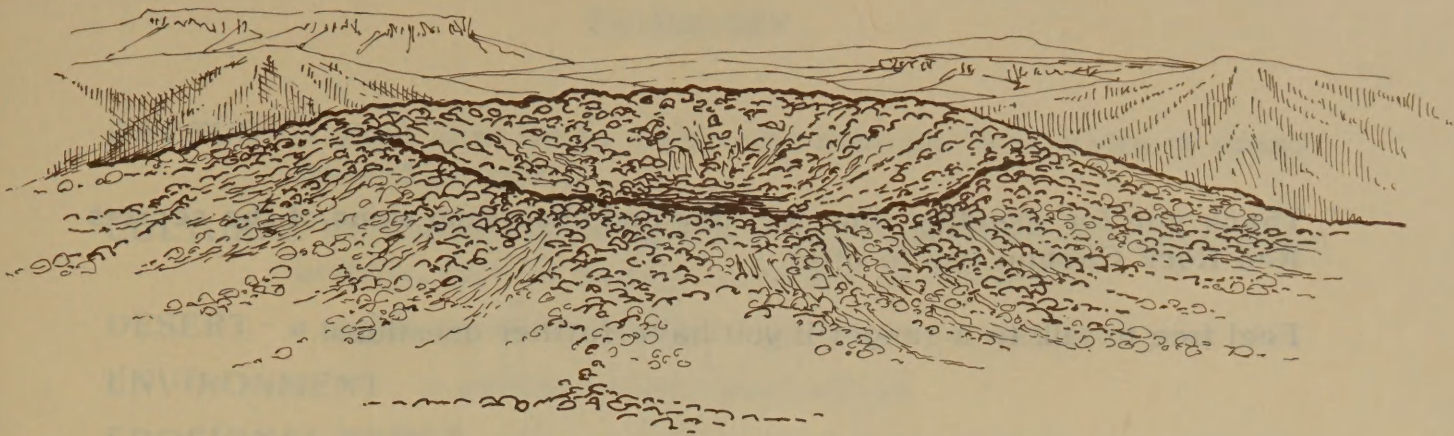
Before you leave the Lost Creek Trail and Red Rock Canyon, consider the following questions:

Did Red Rock Canyon supply the Paiutes with all of their needs? How?

Do you think modern people still need places like Red Rock Canyon? Why or why not?

If you have an opportunity, continue on to Willow Spring to view an agave roasting pit. (It's the optional stop shown on your map.) The roasting pit is .4 miles from the Lost Creek parking lot by trail. If you choose to drive to Willow Springs Picnic area, the roasting pit is about 50 yards from the restroom.

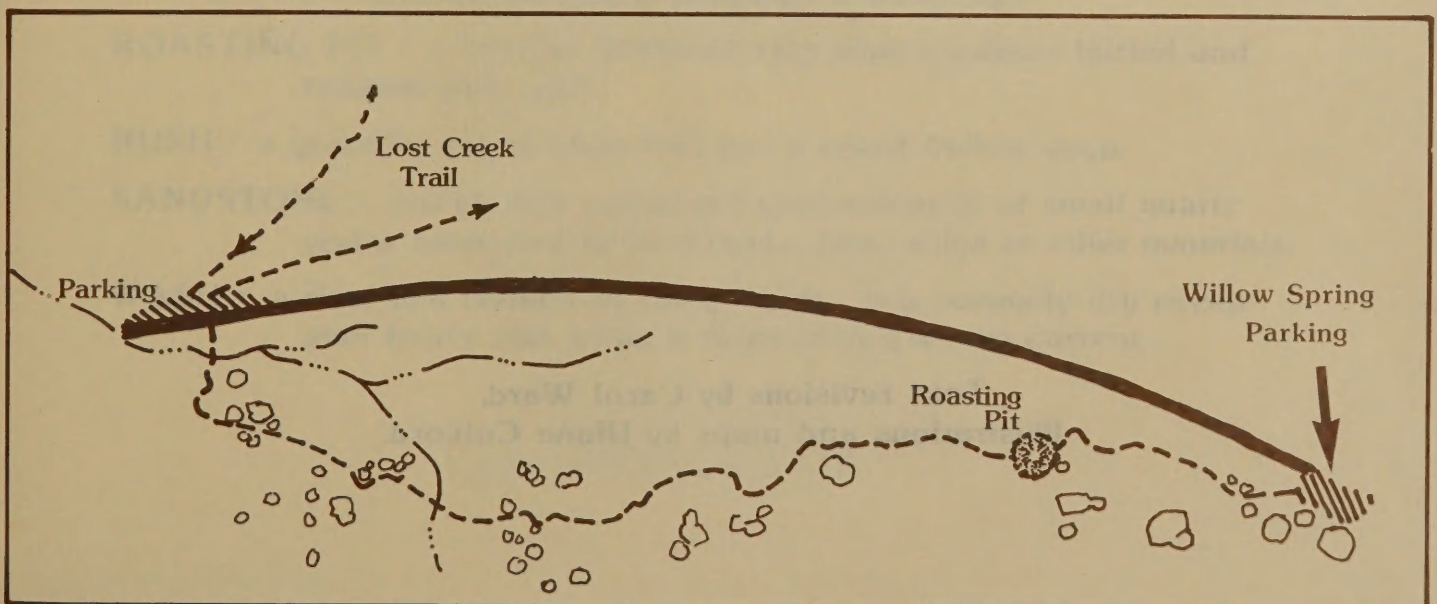




OPTIONAL STOP: PAIUTE BARBECUE

Try to imagine how many roasts took place here. Each piece of limestone you see was only used a few times to provide heat for cooking. After a roast, the Indians would throw the rocks over their shoulders to get the cooked food below. In addition to agave the Indians roasted many types of plants and meats in roasting pits.

Would you like to have been a Paiute, living in Red Rock Canyon, cooking your food in a roasting pit and living in a rock shelter?



Thank you for spending time learning and observing some of the secrets Red Rock Canyon has to offer.

Feel free to talk to a ranger if you have further questions.

Bureau of Land Management



USE ☆ SHARE ☆ APPRECIATE

Text revisions by Carol Ward.
Illustrations and maps by Diane Colcord.

GLOSSARY

- CACTUS** - a plant with fleshy stems and branches with scales or spines instead of leaves.
- CULTURAL RESOURCES** - fragile and non-renewable remains of human activity, such as pottery, drawings or dwellings.
- DESERT** - a region receiving less than ten inches of rain each year.
- ENVIRONMENT** - a person's total surroundings.
- EROSIONAL FORCE** - the movement of particles of the land surface by wind, water, ice or earth movements.
- FOLIAGE** - the leaves of growing plants.
- LIMESTONE** - a rock type formed chiefly of the remains of shells or coral.
- MEADOW** - a tract of grassland.
- MINERAL** - any substance that is neither animal nor vegetable: inorganic matter.
- NATURAL ELEMENTS** - parts of the environment, as in soil, water, air and sunlight.
- PARASITE** - any organism that grows, feeds and is sheltered on or in a different organism while contributing nothing to the survival of its host.
- PAIUTE** - a native American Indian tribe that has inhabited southern Nevada for hundreds of years.
- PETROGLYPHS** - carvings in the rocks made by various southern Nevada Indian groups hundreds of years ago.
- PICTOGRAPHS** - paintings on the rocks drawn by various southern Nevada Indian groups hundreds of years ago.
- ROASTING PIT** - a circular limestone ring where Indians buried and roasted their food.
- RUSH** - a grasslike marsh plant that has a round, hollow stem.
- SANDSTONE** - a rock type composed predominantly of small quartz grains cemented by iron oxide, lime, silica or other materials.
- WASH** - a river bed created by flash floods. It is normally dry except after heavy rain when it flows with a strong current.

GLOSSARY

- CACTUS** - a plant with fleshy stems and branches with scales or spines instead of leaves.
- ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES** - natural resources available for use in human activity, such as power, minerals, or fish.
- DESERT** - a region characterized by low levels of rainfall, sparse vegetation, and few animals.
- ENVIRONMENT** - a person's total surroundings.
- EROSIONAL FORCE** - the movement of particles of the land surface by wind, water, ice or earth movement.
- FOLIAGE** - the leaves of growing plants.
- LIMESTONE** - a rock type formed chiefly of the remains of shells or coral.
- MEADOW** - a flat, open area of land, usually with grass, used for grazing or growing crops.
- MINERAL** - any substance that is neither animal nor vegetable in origin and is not produced by living organisms.
- NATURAL RESOURCES** - resources that are not man-made, such as water, air, and land.
- PARASITE** - any organism that lives on or inside another organism and derives its food from it.
- PARITE** - a small, rounded, smooth, light-colored stone, often used as a decorative element.
- PETROLOGY** - the study of the origin and development of rocks.
- PICTOGRAPH** - a picture or drawing on a rock surface, often made by ancient people.
- ROASTING PIT** - a circular, shallow pit where Indians roasted their food.
- BUSH** - a grasslike, upright plant that has a round, hollow stem.
- SANDSTONE** - a rock type composed predominantly of small grains, grains cemented by iron oxide, lime, silica or other minerals.
- WASH** - a flat bed created by flash floods. It is usually dry except after heavy rain when it flows with a strong current.

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